



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201**

DATE: July 1, 2016

POLICY #: SSA-CW #17-03

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Assistant Directors, Services
Fiscal Officers

FROM: Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW 
Acting Executive Director
Social Services Administration
Stafford Chipungu, Chief Financial Officer 
Budget & Finance

RE: Utilization of Time-Limited Reunification Services Funding

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: Out-of-Home Placement Services

ORIGINATING OFFICE: Out-of-Home Placement Services

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All Local Departments of Social Services

ACTION DUE DATE: July 1, 2016

CONTACT PERSONS: Helene Hornum, Program Analyst
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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy directive is to provide guidance to the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) on the-utilization of Time Limited Reunification Services funded through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. DHR's budget and finance office annually provides each LDSS an allocation.

The federal Promoting Safe and Stable Families funds MUST be used for any time-limited reunification services for children in foster care 15 months or less BEFORE using other support services funds.

ACTION:

Time-Limited Reunification services are **SERVICES PROVIDED** to a child that is removed from his or her home and placed in an out-of-home placement such as a foster family home or a child care institution. These services may be provided to the parent(s) or primary caregiver of such a child in order to facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within a timely fashion. **These services may only be provided during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child is considered to have entered care (removal date).**

Public Law 112-34 has amended the definition of time-limited reunification services. It now also includes peer-to-peer mentoring, support groups for parents and primary caregivers, and services and activities to facilitate access to and visitation of children with parents and siblings.

Goals

- Reduce the length of stay in foster care;
- Establish permanency for children through reunification with their families; and
- Improve the permanency plan of children in out-of-home placement.

The funds may be utilized on the following services:

- Individual, group and family counseling;
- Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services;
- Mental health services;
- Assistance to address domestic violence;
- Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries;
- Transportation to or from any of the services;
- Peer-to-peer mentoring;
- Support groups for parents and primary caregivers; and
- Services and/or activities to facilitate access to and visitation of children with parents and siblings.

Requirements

Promoting Safe and Stable Families funds cannot be combined with other grants or merged into other flex fund accounts. A separate accounting must be maintained. The LDSS is required to report to the United States Department of Health and Human Services the amount of funds spent on EACH service of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program.

A plan or proposal is not required if the funds are spent on any of the nine services shown above. The following services can be provided under Time-Limited Reunification general:

- Aftercare services to reunify families;
- Parenting classes;
- Assisting in negotiating systems including the court and legal system;
- Case management;
- Intensive home-based casework;
- Home-based therapy;
- Family mediation;
- Mentoring to parents; and
- Enhancing personal skills of family members, i.e., teaching anger/depression/anxiety management, self-criticism reduction, and how to handle frustration; enhancing interpersonal skills of family members, i.e., teaching conversational skills, assertiveness skills, listening skills, problem solving and negotiation, giving and accepting feedback, accepting “no” from others, accepting criticism, and displaying sensitivity to others.

As stated above, Time-Limited Reunification services also include:

- Peer-to-peer mentoring;
- Support groups for parents and primary caregivers; and
- Services and activities to facilitate access to and visitation of children with parents and siblings.

If one half (1/2) of LDSS allocation is not spent by January 2, of each year, the remaining amount will be subject to reallocation to other LDSS that are spending their Time-Limited Reunification funds. The number of families and children served, by service, must be submitted quarterly on the attached Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program Time-Limited Reunification Services Quarterly Program Report form (Attachment A). The expenditures reported on the quarterly reports must be reconciled to the Monthly 302 Report to ensure that reported data is consistent. **A LDSS that fails to submit their quarterly reports will risk a reduction and reallocation of their Time Limited Reunification funds to another LDSS.** The quarterly report is to be submitted to Helene Hornum, Program Analyst, Social Services Administration as follows:

The quarterly report submission dates and periods covered are as follows:

| <u>Submission Dates</u> | <u>Periods Covered</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| October 21, 2016 | July 1, 2016-September 30, 2016 |
| January 20, 2016 | October 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016 |
| April 21, 2017 | January 1, 2017– March 31, 2017 |
| July 21, 2017 | April 1, 2017– June 30, 2017 |

The allocation for each SFY and all expenditures for services rendered between July 1 and June 30 must be liquidated (services provided and paid for) by June 30 of each year. The DAFER report and quarterly expenditure reporting will be used to monitor expenditures.

All contracts and purchase orders must follow COMAR Title 21 procurement regulations.

Charge Codes for Time Limited Reunification Services Funding

In order to track and report the use of these funds, please use the following charge codes:

- All child and family-specific expenses should be requested through the Chessie Service Log choosing Category Code **4130** for “PSSF Time-Limited Reunification”.
- Any charges that are not child and family-specific, should use charge code PCA GC950, Project/Subproject number 0302.87, within the Child Welfare Services (N00G0003) program and the appropriate agency object for the purchase being made.

**PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM
TIME-LIMITED REUNIFICATION
QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT**

Local Department: _____
 Person Completing Form: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Report Period: July 1 – September 30 _____ October 1 – December 31 _____
 January 1 – March 31 _____ April 1 – June 30 _____

| Account Name | Account Number/ Project/Sub project/ Object | Expenditures Current Quarter | Expenditures Y-T-D | Obligated Funds to Date | Families Served Current Quarter | Children Served Current Quarter | Families Served Y-T-D | Children Served Y-T-D |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| TIME-LIMITED REUNIFICATION | GC950 0302.87 (non child and family- specific) 4130 (child and family- specific) | | | | | | | |

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|---------------------------|-------|---|
| Allocation | _____ | Mail or Fax the Report to: Helene Hornum Social Services Administration 311 W. Saratoga Street, 5 th Floor Baltimore, MD 21201 Fax #: 410-333-6556 |
| Year-to-Date Expenditures | _____ | |
| Remaining Balance | _____ | |